

Message Text

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PAGE 01 JIDDA 07871 070806Z

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 INR-07 /022 W

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FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6527

CONFIDENTIAL JIDDA 7871

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FOR ASST SEC ATHERTON AND PM DIRECTOR VEST

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, SA, US

SUBJECT: COMMAND AND CONTROL (USMTM)

1. AS YOU KNOW, DEFENSE HAS BEEN INTERESTED FOR SOME TIME
IN BRINGING OUR VARIOUS MILITARY TRAINING COMPONENTS IN SAUDI
ARABIA, AND THE CORPS OF ENGINEERS, UNDER THE COMMAND AND
CONTROL OF THE CHIEF OF US MILITARY TRAINING MISSION (USMTM)
WHOSE RANK WOULD BE RAISED TO THAT OF MAJOR GENERAL. ASSUME
NO CHANGE IN CHIEF USMTM STATUS AS MEMBER OF STAFF OF AMBASSADOR.

2. I HAVE NO OBJECTION, PROVIDED SAG INFORMED IN ADVANCE OF
ELEVATION OF CHIEF USMTM TO HIGHER RANK AND TO COMMAND AND
CONTROL FUNCTIONS OVER OTHER US COMPONENTS AND DOES NOT POSE
OBJECTIONS.

3. YOU ARE NO DOUBT AWARE THAT SAUDIS HAVE DISPLAYED
AMBIVALENT ATTITUDES TOWARD DIFFERENT TRAINING MISSIONS, TENDING
TO FAVOR ENGINEERS IN VARIOUS WAYS, AND MINISTRY OF DEFENSE
HAS PREVENTED CIVILIAN MINISTRIES FROM DEVELOPING COOPERATION
WITH ENGINEERS. USMTM, THROUGH NO FAULT OF ITS OWN, IN MY
OPINION, HAS HAD THE HARDEST ROW TO HOE, AND IT IS POSSIBLE
THAT SAUDI DEFENSE HIERARCHY WILL HAVE SOME QUESTIONS AS TO THE
MEANING OF THIS MOVE.

4. WHILE NORMALLY OUR COMMAND AND ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS
SHOULD BE MATTERS FOR U.S. DECISION ONLY, I BELIEVE
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IT WOULD BE WISE TO INFORM SAUDIS OF THIS PROPOSAL PRIOR TO

PUTTING IT INTO EFFECT.

5. I HOPE YOU WILL ALSO CONSIDER POSSIBLE EFFECT OF PUBLICITY ON SAUDI HOSTS. THERE ARE THOSE, INCLUDING SOVIETS, WHO CARRY ON A STEADY VILIFICATION OF SAUDI-US RELATIONSHIP AND WHO WOULD PROBABLY DESCRIBE THIS PROMOTION-COMMAND-CONTROL DEVELOPMENT AS ESTABLISHMENT OF MAJOR US COMMAND IN SAUDI ARABIA AS ATTESTED BY FACT THAT SENIOR OFFICER'S RANK TO BE RAISED TO THAT OF MAJOR GENERAL. EFFECT OF ANY SUCH PUBLICITY ON SAUDIS CAN BE IMAGINED. AMONG OTHER THINGS, IT COULD AFFECT ADVERSELY POSSIBILITY OF ENLISTING THEIR SUPPORT FOR MIDEASTFOR TO REMAIN IN BAHRAIN. MIDEASTFOR SHOULD OF COURSE BE DEALT WITH AS SEPARATE SUBJECT, BUT WE KNOW FROM EXPERIENCE THAT SEPARATE CONSIDERATION OF MILITARY PROBLEMS IN THIS AREA IS NOT ALWAYS EASY TO ACHIEVE.

6. AS I HOPE TO CALL ON SAUDI DEFENSE MINISTER IN NEAR FUTURE, I WOULD BE PLEASED TO HAVE SUCH GUIDANCE AS YOU CAN PROVIDE. I BELIEVE DEFENSE SHOULD BE BROUGHT TO ADDRESS VARIOUS POINTS MADE IN THIS CABLE, AND I RECOMMEND YOU WITHOLD AGREEMENT UNTIL WE HAVE THOROUGHLY EXPLORED EFFECT, IF ANY, ON SAUDIS OF THIS DEVELOPMENT.

7. THE GIST OF PARAGRAPHS 1, 2, 4 AND 5 ARE BEING PASSED TO USMTM TO USE IN REPLYING TO A MESSAGE FROMUSCINCEUR ON THE COMMAND AND CONTROL SUBJECT. THE CINCEUR MESSAGE (DTG 290845Z NOV 76) IS BEING REPEATED BY SEPTEL TO THE DEPARTMENT FOR INFORMATION.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY TRAINING, MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS, ORGANIZATION & MANAGEMENT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 07 DEC 1976
Decapton Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decapton Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: blochd0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976JIDDA07871
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760451-0359
From: JIDDA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19761267/aaaacfqrq.tel
Line Count: 90
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: STADIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: STADIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: blochd0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 MAR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <23 MAR 2004 by morefirh>; APPROVED <05 NOV 2004 by blochd0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: COMMAND AND CONTROL (USMTM)
TAGS: MASS, SA, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006